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The Dakota Student

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Online shopping and the fate of Columbia Mall

Diane Newberry
The Dakota Student

Sunday, March 26 was Macy's last day of business in Grand Forks. The closure of the store was announced in early January as part of Macy's plan to close

100 stores — 15 percent of their locations — in 2017. Macy's is one of Columbia Mall's four "anchor" stores. Its closure, combined with the recent closure of several other mall retailers such as Vanity, Tip Top Tux and Zales, makes Grand Forks residents nervous about the future of Co-

lumbia Mall and the surrounding shopping district.

David Flynn, Chair of the UND Economics Department, says the possibility of the Columbia Mall failing is a "risk, absolutely, [but] it's not a high risk." Flynn predicts that if the mall were indeed forced to close, the

short term and long term effects might not be all bad for shoppers. Though it would be unfortunate for many to lose their jobs at retail locations, the mall might have the opportunity to reinvent itself. "Brick and mortar stores" have been closing in higher numbers for the past few years

continues on page 2

Valley Voices speak during 48th Annual Writers Conference

Sheldon Hatlen
The Dakota Student

For the fourth consecutive year in a row, the Voices of the Valley (VOTV) have participated in the annual Writers Conference. This year's theme for the conference was "Citizen," and the writers associated with VOTV decided to focus their pieces on the 20th anniversary of the Grand Forks flood of 1997.

VOTV is a nonprofit writing project that began in the fall of 2013. The goal of their project was to integrate both millennial writers as well as elderly and established writers of the Grand Forks area. Taking the funds they raise from their stories, VOTV donates to charitable organizations every year.

"Our first year, we had local millennials write article/stories about elderly citizens in town," Co-director of VOTV, Erin Kunz, said. "So we had them work together, and donated the money to the writers conference. Our second year we wrote about new Americans, so we donated those funds to Global Friends. Last year, we wrote about sense of place and environment and donated those to the River Keepers of Fargo."

Funds from any of the stories associated with VOTV about the flood will go to the Empire Art Center. Hill believes art is in deep waters and may be in need of saving. "Especially with the political climate right now, art is definitely on the line with funding issues," Co-director of VOTV, Emily Hill, said. "I think it's extremely important to support local art. Local art makes our community beautiful and it can also connect people in unique ways. So I think we need to pay closer attention and appreciate what's being created by artists everywhere."

The event dedicated to showcasing the VOTV stories, was hosted in the Memorial Union Ballroom from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday evening. The Writers Conference event took

"We lost our home in the flood and my family still talks about it. So instead of interviewing someone to get their voice, I was able to experiment with my own voice using what I remembered."

-Emily Hill



Kyle Zimmerman / Dakota Student

Following corporate restructuring, the Macy's department store in the Columbia Mall is slated to close. Other stores have recently left the mall, including Bully Brew coffee house and Zales jewelry store.








Kyle Zimmerman / Dakota Student

Macy's department store is one of the tenants leaving their storefront at the Columbia Mall in Grand Forks, N.D.

continues on page 2

Weather Report March 28 to April 1

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
53 / 36 Partly Cloudy	53 / 37 Cloudy	50 / 33 Mostly cloudy	53/ 36 Mostly Cloudy	0 / -23 Partly Cloudy
				

1 | Conference

place over the course of three days, beginning March 22 and concluding on March 24.

This years theme was quite personal for Hill, as she was directly impacted by the effects of the flood.

“I lived in Grand Forks during the flood of ‘97,” Hill said. “I was 11 years old when that happened. We lost our home in the flood and my family still talks about it. So instead of interviewing someone to get their voice, I was able to experiment with my own voice using what I remembered.”

Although Hill has her own voice and her own memory of the event, both her and Kunz enjoy reading and listening to others tell the story from their perspective.

“The theme of this conference is ‘citizen,’” Kunz said. “So they’ve been talking a lot about the power of just simply telling your story. Just having people know your experience as well as knowing others, it’s really humanizing. It generates empathy for one another and over creates a better commu-



Courtesy of Sheila Liming

The 2017 UND Writers Conference included events such as readings by authors, question and answer sessions (pictured), guest panels, workshops and other activities.

nal society.”

Hill and Kunz are both UND alumni, both graduating with degrees in English. They started the Voices of the Valley project together and are very happy they are able to return and participate at these annual Writers Conferences.

“I actually got my masters in English here

at UND,” Hill said. “I feel like I sort of grew up as a writer through the Writers Conference. It’s incredible to be invited and actually have a slot for my own writing as well as other stories that we’re editing.”

For more information on VOTV, you can visit their page on the Writers Conference site. Both

Hill and Kunz encourage locals to participate and submit their stories for future installments.

Sheldon Hatlen is a staff writer for The Dakota Student. He can be reached at sheldon.hatlen@und.edu

A special thanks goes out to Sheila Liming for taking photos of the Writer's Conference and sharing her work with the Dakota Student.

- Dakota Student Staff

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1 | Macy's

due almost exclusively to competition from online retailers. Macy’s itself has said they were primarily closing such a large percentage of their physical locations in order to channel that money back into improving their online store. With traditional models failing in the digital age, it may be time to rethink the mall.

Flynn calls the old notion of an “anchor store” (a large department store

meant to initially draw shoppers to groupings of retailers) an “anchor around the neck of the mall.”

Shoppers are used to the convenience and streamlined experience of online shopping. They are less likely to go to large department store in the first place, and if they do, they plan to get in and get out with exactly what they want. They are no longer compelled to browse through the mall’s smaller retailers.

However, the ‘anchor’ stores remain the

face of the mall, and they are doing it no favors. A revamping of Columbia Mall as Flynn sees it would focus more on what he calls a “specialized experience.” This might mean smaller stores that cater more directly to certain niches.

For example, Ulta Beauty, which hyper-focuses on beauty products and services, has announced plans to open roughly 100 new stores in the coming year. Shoppers today need distinctive reasons and incentives to choose a “brick

and mortar” location when they can purchase the same products from the comfort of their own homes.

As one Columbia Mall employee (who wishes to remain anonymous) put it, “People don’t come to a store because it has something they want. They come back because of how it makes them feel.”

This employee, who currently works at a clothing retailer in the mall, suggests that if the mall wants to improve itself, it should “have

more small businesses, more cultural stuff, more artsy stuff.”

Ironically, it seems that uniqueness and character might just be what the mall, once a beacon of American conformity, needs in order to stay relevant.

In the meantime, Macy’s closure has certainly meant upheaval for Columbia workers. Another employee who also wishes to remain anonymous and works at a food court restaurant at Columbia Mall says that so far, “the mall is being a very good

employer.”

She reports that she personally knows a few former Macy’s employees who have been able to get jobs elsewhere in the mall. Shoppers will also now have to travel to Fargo if they want the higher end department store experience that Macy’s provided, as opposed to lower-end retailers such as JC Penney’s (which will be remaining in Columbia Mall despite the corporation’s closure of many of its physical locations nationwide) or Kohl’s. Change may be beneficial to both retail employees and shoppers in the long term, but the journey to improvement will likely be inconvenient and disruptive.

Diane Newberry is a staff writer for The Dakota Student. She can be reached at diane.newberry@und.edu

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Cameron Campbell
The Dakota Student

In the early 1980s, a legendary punk band was born in Minneapolis, MN, known as The Replacements. The lineup consisted of Chris Mars on drums, Paul Westerberg on lead vocals and guitar, and two brothers. Bob Stinson who played guitar and his younger brother Tommy Stinson on bass.

During their rise, Tommy Stinson was still a kid. He ended up growing up in bars and on the road. The manager of The Replacements actu-

ally became Tommy's legal guardian to get him into bars so he could play the gigs.

As legend has it, Tommy dropped out of school by walking into the principal's office with a boom box and started playing the band's song "F*** School." After that he never went back.

As the years went on, The Replacements would inevitably break up. However, that didn't mean Stinson's musical career was over. He would go on to play bass for many different bands including Soul Asylum and Guns N' Roses.

In the midst of all of that, Stinson created a band that never existed called Bash & Pop. The band imploded before their first show.

Now in 2017, Tommy Stinson went back and brought the band to life with their debut studio album "Anything Could Happen."

The album shows the rock and blues side of Stinson that hasn't been heard since he was in The Replacements. It was also good to hear his voice, rather than him just stay away from the mic.

The entire album is fantastic from start to fin-

ish. It starts off with the song "Not This Time." The song is catchy and immediately sets the tone of the album.

The songs to listen for in this album are "On the Rocks," "Anything Could Happen," "Unf*** You" and "Jesus Loves You."

Starting with "On the Rocks," this was the first song I heard off this album and I immediately fell in love it. The bouncing rock sound drives the song. It calls back to the sounds of end of The Replacements.

"Anything Could Happen" is the title track

for a reason, and it's not just because of the name. The song catches your ear right from the get go. You can hear the influences he received when playing with Soul Asylum.

About midway through the album, the tone starts to gear towards a softer side with slower more acoustic like songs which is never a bad thing. It just makes it better when they hit back with a rocking song.

That song is "Unf*** You." It's just what you need near the end of an album. It shows off the "I don't care" attitude that

you can feel when listening to "The Replacements".

The second to last song "Jesus Loves You" is a great uplifting song. It's not religious at all, and it actually just pokes fun at the phrase.

"Anything Could Happen" is an album that I would highly recommend no matter what music genre you may be into. I am very confident that this album will be on my top three favorite of 2017.

Cameron Campbell is a staff writer for The Dakota Student. She can be reached at cameron.campbell@und.edu

Parks and Rec in Retrospect

Liz Kacher

The Dakota Student

Last week, an article came up on my Facebook which announced which TV series and movies will be leaving Netflix by July. My favorite TV shows are usually safe, while those I'm not interested in are usually the ones to go. To my disappointment, Parks and Recreation was included on that list. Instantly, I thought to myself, "Netflix can't be that cruel..."

So I did some looking into it and determined the article was false, thankfully. Parks and Recreation is safe to stay on Netflix. Netflix confirmed this on their Twitter account on Thursday, March 23.

Thankfully, another of my favorite comedies is safe to stay on Netflix. If you're a fan of The Office and you haven't seen Parks and Recreation, you need to head to your Netflix account and start binge-watching as soon as you can.

The creators of The Office are responsible for the seven season run of Parks and Recreation, which ran from 2009-2015. The series is a mockumentary that follows the Parks and Recreation Department of Pawnee, Indiana. If you ever want to virtually tour Pawnee, NBC kept its hilarious website up even after the series ended.

The fictional city of Pawnee is described on the website as "a city with low operating costs and a sizable labor pool. Its infrastructure is efficiently developed and

its citizens are moderately well educated, making it an acceptable location for business."

The characters are one of the strongest parts of the series. It's hard to pick a character to dislike — I never have. Each character projects a different personality, complimenting each other. It feels as though you're watching a family operate. The creators made the characters relatable which helps you cheer on each character throughout the series.

Thankfully, the show rightfully sent the most boring character away at the end of season two, Mark Brendanawicz, the monotone city planner. Once he was gone, each member of the cast was equally responsible for the endless laughs I had throughout the series.

In place of Brendanawicz came Chris Traeger and Ben Wyatt played by Rob Lowe and Adam Scott respectively. Although Lowe leaves before the end of the series, Scott's lovable, nerdy character, Ben Wyatt, keeps you laughing all the way through the show.

April Ludgate, played by Aubrey Plaza, is easily my favorite main character. She is a nineteen year old at the start of the series, who works at the department as an intern. Her cynicism and disinterest in the job made her an ideal assistant for Parks director, Ron Swanson. Ron runs his department to be as "inefficient as possible," or so he says.

One of the best things about Parks and Rec, is how the series has made even



Photo courtesy of the official Facebook page of Parks and Recreation.

The main cast of Parks and Recreation as it neared the end of its run.

the minor characters great. Jean-Ralphio is one of my favorites amongst those characters. He first appears in the second season, when Tom brings him to the office to interview with Ron to be his next assistant.

He only has 18 appearances out of the 125 episodes aired, but each appearance is memorable than the next due to Jean his cocky personality and hilarious banter. Season five saw the addition of his twin sister, Mona Lisa, who made me wonder if they were twins in real life. They look and act just like each other singing about what happens to them in their best harmony.

While I've mentioned a couple of my favorite characters from Parks and Recreation, it should be noted that all of the other characters

have their quirks as well. It's hard to choose a few characters to profile from an overall outstanding cast. On top of this, Parks even succeeds in their ability to incorporate politics into the show.

During the series, the creators incorporate some of the biggest names in politics rather well. Due to the character Leslie Knope's endless optimistic outlook on the public sector, she manages to meet some of those big names throughout her career in politics.

For Leslie, I don't think anything tops the time she was nearly speechless after meeting her longtime crush, Joe Biden. "Don't let anything happen to him, you understand me?" she told the Secret Service. "He is precious cargo."

Another great exchange

was between former First Lady Michelle Obama and Leslie Knope when she's contemplating a big career move to the national Parks service. The former First Lady advises Leslie, "change happens one person at a time."

The creators of Parks and Recreation spent six years making politics and the public sector a great

thing to laugh at. I encourage you to listen to the advice of Tom Haverford and Donna Meagle and "treat yo 'self" to one of the most hilarious TV show on Netflix.

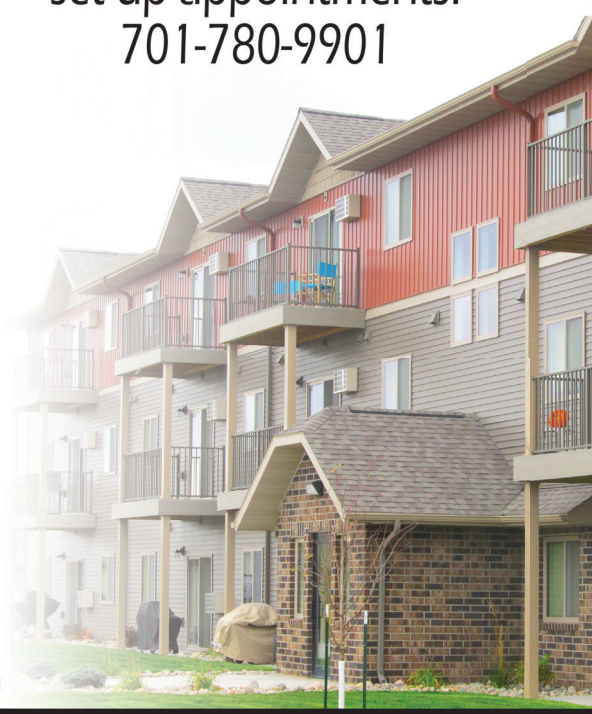
Liz Kacher is a staff writer for The Dakota Student. He can be reached at mary.kacher@und.edu

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Jacob Notermann
The Dakota Student

Halfway down the hallway in Television Center lies an office with a certain theme. The walls feature paintings of outdoor settings; antlers rest on top of the cabinets; a small desk clock is the shape of a fishing rod. “I love the outdoors and taking people outdoors who don’t normally go outdoors,” Monte Koshel said. Koshel started at UND as a student pursuing a degree in broadcasting. He interned as a video journalist for Studio One and wrote for the Dakota Student. After a stint as an intern with the U.S. Olympic Committee, he returned as an employee for the UND Television Center and as a producer for Studio One. This is his 24th year there. The original inspiration to come back to UND: “a job,” Koshel said.

The job? Don’t ask Koshel. He doesn’t know his official title. In broad strokes, he creates videos and teaches video-marketing skills through the Television Center internship program. Despite the quip, he cites the people he rejoined at the television center as a reason for coming back; many of them he considers mentors. “I couldn’t have thought of a better place to work,” Koshel said. “If I could choose where to work, anywhere, this would be it and I still feel this way.” Meanwhile, Koshel has continued this mentorship legacy amongst his student-interns at the television center. Hadley Purdy has worked with Koshel for three semesters between Studio One and as a video intern with the Television Center. “Monte’s constantly giving advice, providing his personal experiences as a

working professional and giving constructive feedback to his students,” Purdy said. “I can confidently say that all of these things have made me a better student, teammate and professional because of Monte’s wisdom that he has passed onto us.” In the 24 years of working at the television center, Koshel said his approach to the job has changed. He initially approached his role as more “peer leadership,” because he was only a year or two older than the students he was leading. He remembered the first time someone he trained got a job, which for him was the end goal of his position. Since then, the main objective has been to help his students understand what it means to be a successful person. After the transition, he said he was able to become a better leader. “My goal was to use video as a vehicle to teach people that these are the things

you need to survive and succeed in a workplace,” Koshel said. In answering every question during the interview, Koshel would somehow reference his passion for helping students succeed. His students agree that what makes him stand out is his focus on assisting students develop their talents in any way. “He always finds time in his busy schedule to meet with all the students he works with,” Purdy said. “When he does, he is 100 percent committed to the time devoted to meeting and/or working with them.” Koshel corroborated the importance of that student element in his position. “If you truly love your job and you’re engaged, it’s because something is there that is something you feel, not something you do,” Koshel said. “When I get to work with students, there’s this energy and excitement

and this process where you see them learning, not just video, but how to be professionals.” Not only do his skills fit the job, but students reference a personality that belongs in the space he works in. “He’s got a great personality and really knows how to relate to students,” Peter Monsrud, a UND senior and Television Center intern said. “He takes his job seriously, but knows how to keep work fun.” Jack Neisen, in his first semester with the Television Center, said watching Koshel work didn’t seem like a job to him. “Everything he talks about or does, he is passionate about,” Neisen said. “He knows what it’s like to be in the student’s shoes, because he began as an intern himself. He is all about improving the student experience.” Being a former intern for the place Koshel now

works has shaped how he approaches his work. He once thought everyone who joined Studio One was looking for the same career goals and aspirations as he had. He would later discover that was not the case. “Students are anything but routine and I find it interesting to lead a group of students through that transition into that work world,” Koshel said. “I figured out I could do my job well when I figured that out. What the important things were to impress upon them.” Despite what he’s done and how he’s done it, you’ll never hear him brag about how good at his job he is. He said he’s not the best at what he does; another element of motivation to his passion.

Jacob Notermann is a staff writer for the Dakota Student. He can be reached at jacob.notermann@und.edu

The Doc is in, El Roco opens their revamped kitchen

Ben Godfrey
The Dakota Student

If you’ve been in the El Roco bar in the past few months, you probably noticed something slightly different going on in the corner. The kitchen is now operated by new management and under a new name, Doc’s Grill. Open from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday, and 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Saturdays, Doc’s serves up tasty bar food (for the most part), that goes great with a cold beer or soda. The thing that separates Doc’s from other places in town is the way they approach the dining experience. They’ve decided to cut out the waiting time involved with traditional service, such as waiting for your order to be taken and for the bill to come. Instead, you simply go up to their counter (separate from El Roco’s bar), order off the menu and pay for your food right away. You then go back to your table and wait for your meal to be brought out to you. In theory, this method is very convenient and allows you to have more time to play darts, cards or whatever you like to do. In reality, the system

can get a little slow, especially when there is only one server at the time (which is common for a week day). On the other hand, this isn’t fast food, and it isn’t really fair to expect it to come out right away. The cooks at Doc’s have created an extensive menu, all of which is cooked up fresh. Most people I’ve spoken with have told me that the food is hit or miss. In my experience, it’s always been above average. That’s not to say it’s amazing or mind-blowing; that is definitely not the case. As far as bar foods go, Doc’s does the trick. The menu has an array of appetizers including curly fries, onion rings, mini egg rolls, traditional and boneless wings, jalapeño poppers and many more. The fries and onions are very good, and the wings come with a ton of different sauces/seasonings. There are also wraps, sandwiches, burgers, salads and baskets. All entrees are reasonably priced and served with french fries (which are really good here), or an upgraded side. I definitely recommend the Cuban sandwich with fries for \$10. A few other delicious options are the shrimp po’ boy, walleye sandwich and the Doc’s jalapeño burger.

The cooks at Doc’s Grill like to experiment with new creations, and have different nightly specials that change often. Check out their Facebook page to see some of the great things they’ve come up with and keep up to date on new specials! Thursday through Saturday, Doc’s is open till 11:00 p.m. After 10:00 p.m. is when they start serving their late-night menu. This menu has slightly more limited options, but is perfect for satisfying the munchies before a night out. When talking about Doc’s Grill, I can’t forget to mention El Roco. These two have a sort of symbiotic relationship — people come to “the rock” to have some drinks, play casino and bar games, and maybe sing some karaoke. Now that Doc’s is here, they can also get some good food. On the other side, people might just come in because they’re hungry and end up ordering something from the bar. I’d say that the two make a great pair. There’s usually something going on at El Roco. Tuesday and Wednesday is free-to-play poker night. Wednesday is also the open mic night, although I rarely see people participating. Thursday is, of course, karaoke night. This used to be a

huge pull for college students on Thursdays, but bars downtown have recently begun to compete for business with awesome drink specials. Friday is also a karaoke and

DJ night, and Saturday is live trivia from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The old kitchen at El Roco was sub-par. Now, with the new operations of Doc’s Grill, hopefully

more people will think of food when they think of the “the rock.”

Ben Godfrey is a staff writer for The Dakota Student. He can be reached at benjamin.godfrey@und.edu

Restaurant Review

★

★

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★★★★☆

Doc's Grill

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Radically Changed

Jake Andersen
The Dakota Student

"Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun." -2 Corinthians 5:17

Tatsuya Koyama did not expect to learn this verse. In fact, he had never heard of it before coming to UND as an English Learning School (ELS) student from Japan last September.

Instead, he expected what most ELS students do: to learn English, make friends and explore America.

While meeting these expectations has been life changing for Koyama, they do not compare to how the unexpected has radically changed his life.

Koyama, 21, came to UND from Osaka, Japan for an eight month study abroad through Kidai University. From the start, Koyama looked forward to accomplishing his childhood dream of learning English and coming to the United States, but soon after arriving at UND, Koyama was hit with terrible news.

"I was in my homestay house," Koyama said. "I got a message from my sister that our mother had a tumor. I called my sister and I asked her for some information about her and she told me that our mother was in the hospital."

The news of his mother's cancerous brain tumor came a week after arriving in Grand Forks. It made for an even tougher start to his time at UND, as he was already struggling with his English courses, making friends and transitioning to American culture.

Additionally, Koyama has a tight relationship with his mom, as he is the only one of three siblings who lives at home and his mom and dad are separated.

"I felt worry and anxiety," Koyama said. "I was thinking that if my mother died, how would I stand or how would I live without her? I wanted to go back as soon as I could."

In the midst of a tough first month, fellow Japanese exchange student and roommate Rui Okabe recommended that Koyama check out Freedom Church in downtown Grand Forks. Even though Koyama considered himself an atheist and grew up in a country with a Christian population around one percent, the rec-

ommendation caught his interest.

"Rui told me church was a good place to make friends in the U.S. I wanted to make friends with American people. At the time, that was the reason to go to church," Koyama said.

Seeking a refuge from his struggles, Koyama went to the 11 a.m. church service on Oct. 2, along with Okabe and three other Japanese friends. Looking back, he admits the first outing at Freedom Church was a unique experience.

"Everyone sang songs, everyone lifted their hands, I felt strange, different from Japan," Koyama said. "I have been to the Japanese church in Japan once and Japan doesn't have a music band, so I felt a difference. I felt strange, but I felt their power. I felt their faith."

At that church service Koyama and his friends met Naoto Ashino, an aviation graduate who was flight instructing at UND. As a Christian from Japan, Ashino took Koyama under his wing right away, along with his friends.

"To my surprise, Tatsuya was the one who asked me about God, and I realized he was seeking God," Ashino said. "I noticed there was no doubt in his heart and his face was shining with hope. I was hoping to share the gospel with him even before he asked me about God."

Afterwards, Ashino met with the group of Japanese students two to four times a week to cook Japanese food, play Nintendo 64 and practice English, as well as read the Bible and pray for one another. As Ashino continued pouring into the group, Koyama saw something different about Ashino.

"He was not a typical Japanese person. At the time, I thought about how cool he was," Koyama said. "Whatever we said to Naoto, Naoto accepted. He is very patient and I wondered how he was so patient. The difference between them (Christians) is patience and how they treat people."

Additionally, Ashino introduced Koyama to UND Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, a student organization gathering at 7 p.m. on Thursday nights in room 1350 of the Reed Keller building. Through the ministry, Koyama got involved in a small group and was embraced by a welcoming community.

"When we meet people at Chi Alpha, they always

smile. They talk to us a lot even if we are international students. They are awesome," Koyama said. "I think the typical American is not willing to speak to international students, but people at Chi Alpha are willing to do that. Every time I go there, I feel warmth, belongingness, I connect with people very deeply and I feel they are genuine and authentic friends."

The community at Chi Alpha and Freedom Church especially helped Koyama through his mother's health situation.

"It helped a lot. While I was in Chi Alpha, church and small group, I felt like I didn't have to think about my mother too much," Koyama said. "The atmosphere at church and Chi Alpha made me not pay attention to the case of my mother. I felt when I was in church or anywhere involved with Chi Alpha or Christianity, she would probably be good. She would get healed and the tumor would be gone."

The sense that his mother would be okay grew after a small group in the middle of October. After opening up about his mother's condition with his group, Koyama remembers everyone circling up for prayer in Johnstone Hall's third floor study lounge and his small group leader Judah Negron praying for his mom.

In Koyama's view, the prayer did not just happen, it worked, as two weeks later, his mother underwent successful surgery to have her tumor removed, along with no sign of cancer.

"I was really happy. I felt relief. I had nothing to say. It was literally healing given from God," Koyama said.

From there, Koyama and his friends continued going to small group on Monday nights and learned more about God and how to live as a Christian.

"We had basic questions," Koyama said. "We didn't know anything at all. How do we behave as Christians? How shouldn't we behave? How do we help people? How do we love people? How do we communicate with people? Basically, about life."

They also developed close relationships with Americans in their group, but especially their small group leader, Negron.

"He's one of my best friends in the U.S.," Koyama said. "I still don't understand why he was interested



Daniel Yun / Dakota Student

Tatsuya Koyama is a UND exchange student from Japan who has become recently interested in the Christian faith.

in a Japanese guy. Without him, we wouldn't improve our English skills and we wouldn't have many friends in the U.S. Because of him, we have everything that we have here."

Nevertheless, after almost a month of going to Freedom Church, Chi Alpha and small group, Koyama still had questions about becoming a Christian.

"I was wondering if Jesus exists or not," Koyama said. "When I spent time with Naoto, he told me a lot about it and he taught me that living with Jesus is good for our life and then that made me accelerate my feelings (for Jesus)."

All of those doubts went away during one service at Freedom Church on Oct. 23, Koyama remembers worshipping at the 11 a.m. service and dealing with the heartbreak of breaking up with his girlfriend back in Japan.

"I was singing a song and I was about to cry and then I felt like God touched my heart," Koyama said. "I got healed and cured from him. Then, I talked about it with Judah and Naoto and then that night I went to Naoto's house and I decided to be a follower. I wanted to be a believer."

Ashino, along with his roommate Trevor Lachance, prayed over Koyama to accept Jesus into his life at their apartment that night.

"I was super pumped when he said he wanted to

pray to receive Jesus into his heart," Ashino said. "I was like 'oh my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my' because Satoshi (one of Koyama's best friends) received Jesus into his heart just a few days before Tatsuya did, and I thought God wants to do something amazing and that's beyond my thoughts."

While Koyama did not expect to become a Christian in America, it is the decision that has radically changed his life.

"He (God) has been changing me a lot. He's a great, perfect father," Koyama said. "Before that, I use to make fun of my friends. If my friends did something I didn't like, I would lose my temper quickly or ignore that person completely, but after I became a follower, I don't do that. Now, I like serving my friends, complimenting my friends. It's a total difference."

As Koyama continues to grow in his newfound faith, he is in the midst of finishing his last month of the ELS program and graduates at the end of March before heading back to Osaka, Japan in April. While he is excited to be reunited with friends and family, he is also concerned about coming back as a Christian.

"The number of people that believe in Jesus is just one percent in Japan, so we are a minority. Japanese culture and tradition doesn't like minority. They put priority on the majority," Koyama

said. "That's kind of what I am afraid of when I go back to Japan. I may not be able to tell people that I am Christian. I may have a difficult time finding a church and connecting with a community like Chi Alpha."

Even so, Koyama does not see anything changing his love for God.

"I go back to Japan with belief. Even when I go back, I will still be a Christian," Koyama said. "As a Christian, we need to put that first, as the first carriage in the train, so if the train moves off the track, the top of the train doesn't move, it's very tight and steady. So if we put Christianity at the top of our life, we don't get lost."

As Koyama gets closer to heading home, there is one clear takeaway from his experience at UND.

"Going to school and learning English is good and awesome, but everything here, taught me about life," Koyama said. "Going to church and knowing people taught me about life, to take advantage of things in the Bible and how to live with faith."

With that, it is fair to say "an old life is gone and a new life has begun."

Jake Andersen is a staff writer for The Dakota Student. He can be reached at jacob.t.andersen@und.edu

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Kansas Jayhawks open practice during 2016 NCAA March Madness

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Jack Harvey
Dakota Student

When was the last time you looked at your bracket? Not since the round of 32? Many brackets deemed to be “the one” have now found the bottom of a wastebasket.

At this point, your March Madness bracket should be six feet under after some of the upsets that happened over this past week. Michigan and Wisconsin worked up some Big Ten magic as eight and nine seeds to get all the way to the Sweet Sixteen only to get kicked out ending their hopes.

South Carolina State showed that basketball isn't just a North Carolina sport, making their way to the elite eight as a ten seed. Meanwhile, Xavier, a school who literally burned the month of Feb. and put the ashes in a jar made it to the elite eight as well.

Oregon also worked its way to the elite eight, looking to win the first title since 1939, the first NCAA basketball tournament.

With all the upsets and last second shots, it makes you wonder if you can really pick a perfect bracket. Some

argue that not much goes into a bracket selections but a lot does go into how you select. Some do the traditional high seed advances, others pick by the mascot/school colors, then there are some who watch film on teams to help their picks and find that Cinderella team to make a historic run.

The strangest system of all is “the Duke never wins” system. If you're a college basketball fan, you either love them or hate them. Sometimes you hate them so much you make sure they don't advance past the second round every year. Is it efficient? Of course not, but when it happens like it did this year, you look like an absolute genius.

It's tough not to just go with all the high seeds when filling out your bracket. You think they're the high seed for a reason; why should you question the committee who makes the brackets? This year was not a good year to go with that system. The seeding for teams was all messed up this year.

Wisconsin and Michigan got the eight and nine seed while Minnesota (who lost to Wisconsin twice) got a

five seed. Some could argue that Minnesota was given that high seed knowing they'd be upset to boost ratings but let's not go down that rabbit hole.

Often taboo in the world of making brackets, is making multiple brackets in the same pool. There's been times where in a pool of about 20 brackets, seven of those belong to one guy. A guy who has “every plausible outcome filled out in each brackets.”

Thanks to upsets like Wisconsin, Michigan, South Carolina, and Xavier there are no perfect brackets left. Out of the millions made this year through ESPN, nobody owns a perfect bracket. This is due in large part to schools such as Duke and Villanova who were favorites to win it all this year see a quick exit in the second round.

March Madness is a cruel and unpredictable event. Upsets and buzzer beaters lurking at every game but if you play your cards right, you just might be able to perfectly pick the round of 32.

Jack Harvey is a staff writer for Dakota Student. He can be reached at jack.harvey@und.edu

Sports

Schedule

W Softball
@ Weber State
3/31 @ 3:00 p.m. - Ogden, Utah

W Softball
@ Weber State
3/31 @ 3:00 p.m. - Ogden, Utah

M Tennis
@ Weber State
3/31 @ 12:00 p.m.

W Tennis
vs. Northern Arizona
4/1 1:00 p.m.

M Track & Field
Mondo Team Challenge
4/1 TBA - Sacramento, Calif.

W Track & Field
Mondo Team Challenge
4/1 TBA - Sacramento, Calif.

The future between the posts

Thomas McCullough
Dakota Student

On Friday, the defending NCAA Men's Hockey champions began the weekend with a soul-crushing loss to Boston University in the NCAA West Regional Tournament, thus ending their season. But whether or not the season ends in triumph or heartbreak, at the end of each year, the University of North Dakota Fighting Hawks are left wondering which of its superstars will return the next, and who will leave for the NHL.

Such is the nature of first-rate college hockey programs.

Perhaps the most compelling question mark is in regards to UND's starting goaltender, junior Cam Johnson. Last year, he helped lead the Fighting Hawks to a National championship with an impressive .935 save percentage and 1.66 goals against average. As every hockey team knows, it's not rare to put together a solid, competitive hockey team. But to be great, having an elite goaltender is a must. And last year, Johnson absolutely was.

He was so elite, in fact, that it raised serious questions about whether he would return to UND, or sign with an NHL team as a free agent. To the joy of many North Dakotans, we all know by now which option he

picked.

This season, while Johnson's numbers may look modest in comparison to his previous, posting a final save percentage of .904 and goals against average of 2.38 are indeed respectable.

This is especially true considering nine pivotal players from last year's championship run, Drake Caggiula, Bryn Chyzik, Coltyn Sanderson, Nick Schmaltz, Paul LaDue, Luke Johnson, Keaton Thompson and Troy Stecher have left UND to sign pro contracts. Johnson undoubtedly noticed the loss of their presence, as he faced 93 more shots this year (905) than he did last year (812).

Now that the season has ended, UND fans are once again wondering whether Johnson will remain a Fighting Hawk next season. Given his collegiate career thus far, it's safe to say that North Dakota fans are all pulling for him to come back. But if he does indeed sign a professional contract this summer, UND must look into its other options at starting goalie.

Currently, there are three other goaltenders on the roster besides Johnson. One of them, Matt Hrynkiw, is a senior and therefore ineligible to return to the roster next season. Though Hrynkiw is the oldest goalie on the team, Johnson established himself as the starter



UND goalies Cam Johnson (Left) and Matej Tomek (Right) are among the three goaltenders that could compete for top spot next season.

these past two seasons. The other two goalies are sophomores Ryan Anderson and Matej Tomek.

Ryan Anderson, from Roseau, Minnesota, made the team last year as a walk on. He has not seen any action in goal for the fighting Hawks yet.

Matej Tomek, From Bratislava, Slovakia, was recruited by former head hockey coach Dave Hakstol. Additionally, he was drafted in the third round of the 2015 NHL draft by the Philadelphia Flyers, Hakstol's current team. While his stats were better than Ryan Anderson's when they were both in the NAHL two years ago (Tomek posted a commendable .928 save percentage), Tomek's performance in his two appearances this season may be cause for concern.

In just 32 minutes of play, Tomek let in four

goals while only making nine saves — a horrid .692 save percentage. Given this small sample size however, it may be irrational to overanalyze these stats. If given a full year's worth of playing time at UND, Tomek's likelihood of posting similar stats is next to zero. But it certainly doesn't help his case.

As of now, UND's current plan at starting



Nick Nelson/Dakota Student

goaltender for the 2017-2018 season is Cam Johnson, who will be a senior. But given Johnson's talent, UND must be ready with a backup plan if he decides to go pro. If that happens, the Fighting Hawks essentially have two options at goalie: Matej Tomek and Ryan Anderson. Due to the NHL's interest in Tomek, Anderson may seem like

the natural replacement. But going into this summer and fall, both goalies have something to prove.

Thomas McCullough is a staff writer for Dakota Student. He can be reached at Thomas.a.mccullough@und.edu

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